The Birds of Sind: A Review

BY

D. A. Holmes and J. O. Wright

[*Continued from Vol.* **65** (3) : 556]

Larus hemprichii Bruch. Sooty Gull

This gull was common in Karachi harbour in mid-April, but Ticehurst states that it is found there throughout the year, except in July (when they are breeding on the island of Astola, off the Mekran Coast).

Larus argentatus Pontoppidan. Herring Gull

Larus fuscus Linnaeus. Lesser Blackbacked Gull

The larger gulls are common visitors to Karachi harbour, and immature gulls of uncertain species were occasionally seen in Lower Sind in winter (up to mid-April).

Larus ichthyaetus Pallas. Great Blackheaded Gull

This fine gull seems to be common in some winters only. It was very common on Kalri Lake in February and March 1963, but we have comparatively few subsequent records. Ticehurst saw it only once, on Manchar Lake.

Larus brunnicephalus Jerdon. Brownheaded Gull

Larus ridibundus Linnaeus. Blackheaded Gull

Common visitors, inland and on the coast, leaving in April (latest date, May 16). The Blackheaded is generally much the commoner bird.

Larus genei Brème. Slenderbilled Gull

Seen occasionally at any season in small numbers, on the coast, and inland in Lower Sind, on two occasions as far north as Hyderabad. However, Roberts reports that they sometimes extend north to Manchar Lake and even to Kandhkot.

Chlidonias hybrida (Pallas). Whiskered Tern

The status of the Whiskered Tern in Sind is not clear. It is mainly a passage migrant and winter visitor, with quite large parties lingering through to early June in the south. We have no knowledge of breeding in Sind, although they may perhaps still do so in some years, and the jheels along the Eastern Nara would be worth investigation at this season.

Gelochelidon nilotica (Gmelin). Gullbilled Tern

A common tern on the coast, it is seen more rarely inland, in Lower Sind in small numbers between mid-August and mid-May. According to Roberts it even occurs at Kandhkot in Upper Sind.

Hydroprogne caspia (Pallas). Caspian Tern

Seen occasionally in very small numbers in Lower Sind, mostly in winter, but a few linger on through the summer, and Roberts has seen them at Kandhkot in autumn, disappearing when the pools begin to dry out.

Sterna aurantia J. E. Gray. Indian River Tern

Probably the commonest tern in Sind, breeding on the Indus sandbanks in April and May, and wandering widely over the canal system and jheels when the river rises in June, and in winter.

[**Sterna hirundo** Linnaeus. Common Tern

Not positively identified, but birds thought to be this species were seen in May, July and September along the Indus and at Kalri Lake.]

Sterna acuticauda J. E. Gray. Blackbellied Tern

The other common and resident tern of Sind, with a status and distribution similar to the Indian River Tern.

Sterna albifrons Pallas. Little Tern

Apart from the coastal strip, the Little Tern is rather sparse in Sind but is apparently resident in small numbers along the Indus, probably breeding with the other resident terns, spreading out to some jheels later in the summer (they are quite common at Kalri Lake from June to August).

[**Sterna** sp. Sea Terns

We visited the coast infrequently and have little knowledge of the sea terns, but both Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii* and *S. bengalensis*) were common in Karachi harbour in October and April, and the Sandwich Tern (*S. sandvicensis*) was also present in April.]

Rynchops albicollis Swainson. Indian Skimmer

The Skimmer has been known to breed on the Indus, but is now apparently rare, and our only records are of small parties flying south along the river at Hyderabad on July 27 and September 5, 1965. Its status is uncertain, but it must be remembered that most of the Indus itself is rather inaccessible.

Pterocles exustus Temminck. Indian Sandgrouse

This is the only species of sandgrouse that we positively identified, and it is a common resident in the jebel regions and desert areas, including areas of scrub-land within the cultivated plains. The Coronetted Sandgrouse (*P. coronatus*) was suspected on several occasions, in jebel areas, but never confirmed, while Roberts considers the Painted Sandgrouse (*P. indicus*) to be a resident in rocky foothills and thorn scrub in S.W. Sind.

Columba livia Gmelin. Blue Rock Pigeon

Very common especially near buildings. We have no records of either the Eastern Stock Pigeon (*C. eversmanni*) or the Wood Pigeon (*C. palumbus*).

Streptopelia decaocto (Frivaldszky). Collared Turtle Dove

Abundant and widespread throughout the plains.

Streptopelia tranquebarica (Hermann). Red Turtle Dove

Widely but rather sparsely distributed over the wooded and more fertile districts. It is largely a summer visitor, although some may be resident, as we have seen them in the north early in February.

Streptopelia senegalensis (Linnaeus). Little Brown Dove

Probably as common as *S. decaocto*, and more willing to extend into desert scrub.

Psittacula eupatria (Linnaeus). Large Indian Parakeet

Ticehurst only knew this parakeet in Karachi, suggesting that they were descendants of escaped captive birds. However, Eates (1937) stated that they are common in Lower Punjab, and that it is a common breeding resident at Ubauro, just within Sind. He described small flocks wandering south in November, to about the level of Nawabshah, and forecasted that the spread of canals may allow an extension of range.

On July 17, 1964, there was an influx of some 50 birds along the first half-mile of the tree-lined Nara Canal below Sukkur. They became more dispersed over the following few weeks, but odd birds were still seen in September, and 2 were seen in Hyderabad on November 2. At least 2 were present in a well-timbered, overgrown garden beside the Sukkur-Chak river bund on April 15, 1965. Unfortunately we were stationed in Hyderabad in 1965, and were unable to establish whether they were breeding in the Sukkur area.

Psittacula krameri (Scopoli). Roseringed Parakeet

Abundant throughout the well-timbered parts of Sind.

Clamator jacobinus (Boddaert). Pied Crested Cuckoo

A common summer visitor to damp wooded areas and thickets, arriving most regularly at the end of the first week of June, leaving in September. It is perhaps on the increase, as Ticehurst knew of no records from Upper Sind, whereas Eates (1937) found them common at Jacobabad. We found them to be especially common in the flooded riverain areas at Sukkur.

Cuculus canorus Linnaeus. Cuckoo

Our only definite record is of one near Jacobabad on April 10. Ticehurst described it as a passage migrant, not wintering in Sind.

Eudynamys scolopacea (Linnaeus). Koel

The northward spread of the Koel has been well documentated by Ticehurst, and by Eates (1937 and 1938). It is now very common in Lower and Central Sind, but is still perhaps rather scarce in Upper Sind, and only a visitor there (in Sukkur in 1964, none were heard until mid-May, whereas they begin to call at the end of March in Lower Sind). It is not known for certain whether it is entirely resident in Sind, and some may be only summer visitors, but the bubbling call may be heard occasionally throughout the winter in Hyderabad and Karachi.

Taccocua leschenaultii Lesson. Sirkeer Cuckoo

This seems to be a very rare bird in Sind. It was virtually unknown in Ticehurst's time, but is evidently spreading, for Menesse (1939) saw it in several places in the Hyderabad-Shahdadpur area. We saw solitary birds on three occasions, in desert scrub on the edge of the sandhills at Nabisar, and beside the Mithrao Canal near Jhudo, in August, and beside the Pinyari near Sujawal, in April. Roberts says that it is resident in thorn scrub at Malir, near Karachi.

Centropus sinensis (Stephens). Coucal

Common resident along canal bank thickets and around jheels throughout the plains, its call can be heard at any season.

Tyto alba (Scopoli). Barn Owl

A good account of the resident owls of Sind is given by Eates (1939). The Barn Owl is evidently pretty rare, and we found only one bird, in a tomb in a ruined village site in very barren country between Badin and Jati, in May 1963. A second bird could not be found. We never specifically searched old tombs for Barn Owls, and probably missed several more as a result.

[**Otus brucei** (Hume). Striated Scops Owl

Otus scops (Linnaeus). Scops Owl

There are very few records of either of these owls in Sind, and we have no knowledge of them. *O. brucei* is evidently a rare resident, which Eates saw only three times in 18 years.]

Otus bakkamoena Pennant. Collared Scops Owl

Ticehurst and Eates found this owl not uncommon in the better-wooded parts of Sind, but we did not become aware of it until 1965, in Miani Forest and along the Pinyari Canal, both near Hyderabad, and near Sukkur. It is difficult to find unless the call is listened for at night, for they tend to sit motionless by day (J.O.W. was sitting in an overgrown garden for nearly an hour before noticing a pair of these owls quietly watching him, motionless, from the next tree).

Bubo bubo (Linnaeus). Eagle-Owl

According to Eates (1937 and 1939), the Eagle-Owl is not uncommon in the dry hilly tracts (and in the Thar Desert east of Umarkot), and habitat dictates that owls of *Bubo* sp. seen by us at Kot Diji and Pir Patho, and reported to us from the Gaj gorge, were of this species. Eates knew of only two records in the plains, away from the typical habitat, at Mirpur Mathelo (near Sukkur), and a nest reported by Ticehurst near Badin.

During the summer of 1965, we watched several Eagle-Owls, recognized by their quite distinct call, along a four-mile stretch of the Pinyari Canal, up and down stream from the Hyderabad-Tando Muhammed Khan road crossing. We first found 2 on May 8, and saw or heard them subsequently on each evening visit (until visits ceased in September), and there may well have been 5 or 6 birds present along this stretch. They may have been 3 pairs, or a single family dispersed from the previous winter's breeding season. Of all the sites where this owl might occur in the plains, this is perhaps the most ideal. The site is only 2 or 3 miles from the low jebel of Ganjo Takar ; the deep, wide Pinyari and Fuleli Canals run side by side, with very high spoil banks covered with dense thickets between them.

Bubo coromandus (Latham). Dusky Horned Owl

This is the commonest of the genus, according to Ticehurst and Eates, in the forest, riverain and canal tracts, but we have only one definite record, of a pair in the riverain forest above Hyderabad (although other owls seen in the Badin and Jati areas were presumed to be of this species), and we never heard the call. However, it is probably quite a common bird which we have overlooked.

[**Bubo zeylonensis** (Gmelin). Brown Fish Owl

This very rare owl, never found by Ticehurst, and seen only twice in 18 years by Eates, evaded us, although D.A.H. has an unconfirmed record from flooded tamarisk at Muradani in December, 1965.]

Athene brama (Temminck). Spotted Owlet

The commonest owl in Sind, and certainly the most conspicuous by day, throughout the cultivated plains, in woods, gardens, tree-lined canals etc., and even amongst buildings in Sehwan. Oddly, we rarely heard it, despite countless nights spent in rest house gardens.

[**Asio otus** (Linnaeus). Longeared Owl

We never saw this uncommon winter visitor].

Asio flammeus (Pontoppidan). Shorteared Owl

Our only record is of 3, perhaps 4, in open fields at Usta Mohammed, on February 21.

[**Caprimulgus europaeus** Linnaeus. European Nightjar

We failed to identify this nightjar, said by Ticehurst to be a common passage migrant in spring and autumn].

Caprimulgus mahrattensis Sykes. Sykes's Nightjar

The commonest nightjar of Sind, found on open ground or in bare scrub in the plains. We never saw it perch in trees. The note is a low churring or purring on one note, sometimes continuous, and slightly similar to *C. europaeus*, but only audible at very close range except on a still night.

Caprimulgus asiaticus Latham. Common Indian Nightjar

Ticehurst knew of only one or two winter records of this species from Sehwan. Eates (personal communication) collected an egg near Sujawal in 1935. Its range would appear to be spreading (probably from the south-east), for it can now be heard commonly in Lower Sind. We found it common at Sirani (south of Badin), Jati, Ladiun, Muradani Dhand and beside the Ganjo Takar jebel south of Hyderabad (our most northerly record), and Roberts heard it at Malir (near Karachi). The call can be heard at any season.

Apus apus (Linnaeus). Swift

One Pallid Swift (*A. a. pallidus*) was seen near the Karachi rubbish tip on April 18, 1965. Another solitary swift, probably *A. a. pekinensis*, was seen at plains level along the Hyderabad-Sehwan road, between the Lakki Hills and the Indus, on August 13, 1965. Although *A. a. pekinensis* has never been definitely identified in Sind, it is not unreason-

able that it might occasionally straggle down from the hills of Baluchistan where it is said to breed.

Apus affinis (J. E. Gray). House Swift

Very common in towns, but as Ticehurst noted, the majority appear to leave for the winter, more especially perhaps from Upper Sind, returning in February.

Ceryle rudis (Linnaeus). Lesser Pied Kingfisher

Very common throughout the canal system, and around jheels.

Alcedo atthis (Linnaeus). Common Kingfisher

This is the least common of the three kingfishers. It is quite common in winter, but small numbers are resident about canals and jheels.

Halcyon smyrnensis (Linnaeus). Whitebreasted Kingfisher

Not as common as the Lesser Pied Kingfisher, but more widely distributed, being less confined to canals and edges of pools.

[**Merops apiaster** Linnaeus. European Bee-eater

There are very few records of this bird in Sind, and we never saw it.]

Merops superciliosus Linnaeus. Bluecheeked Bee-eater

The distribution of this bird in Sind has been described by Ticehurst, and by Eates (1939). Although *M. philippinus* is the commoner species in the Punjab, we believe that *M. superciliosus* is the usual form in Sind. It is a very common passage migrant, arriving in April, probably from the west (our earliest record is of 7 flying east near Jacobabad on April 10). They are widespread in May, especially near water although some are also found in desert areas. Only odd birds are seen through the summer, but we found them generally distributed over the reed-beds at Jamraohead on May 11, where coitus was observed. Parties seen in mid-August about the Bahmanabad ruins (near Nawabshah), around Manchar Lake, and in rocky desert south of Sehwan, suggest other possible breeding sites, as the return passage does not begin until later in August. They are widely distributed again in September and October, the last stragglers being seen in mid-November.

Merops orientalis Latham. Green Bee-eater

Very common and widely distributed in well-timbered areas.

Coracias garrulus Linnaeus. European Roller

Solitary birds were seen at Hyderabad on September 19 and 26 (and by Roberts on September 3 near Karachi). It is a scarce passage migrant.

Coracias benghalensis (Linnaeus). Indian Roller

Common and generally distributed resident.

Upupa epops Linnaeus. Hoopoe

A common winter visitor and passage migrant, arriving in late-July, and leaving in late-march. Earliest dates are July 20 (1964, Larkana), and July 18 (1965, Tatta) and the latest date is April 4. They may be encountered in bare desert on migration. We have never heard it call in Sind. These birds appeared to have very little white in the crest, and certainly less than in the breeding form in the hills at Quetta.

[**Megalaima haemacephala** (P. L. S. Müller.) Crimsonbreasted Barbet

Ticehurst notes two records of this bird, which we never found.]

Jynx torquilla Linnaeus. Wryneck

3 winter records, at Dabeji (near Karachi) on October 16, and near Sukkur and Hyderabad in February.

Dinopium benghalense (Linnaeus). Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker

Common in well-timbered areas.

Dendrocopos assimilis (Blyth). Sind Pied Woodpecker

Common, and more prone to venture into less wooded country than the previous species. We did not confirm whether or not it occurs in the south-east,where Eates (1937) states that it is replaced by the next form, but the ranges of the two species certainly overlap in the Hyderabad area.

Dendrocopos mahrattensis (Latham). Yellowfronted Pied Woodpecker

Eates (1937) has described this bird's range in S.E. Sind. We have seen it at Naukot, Mirpur Batoro, and by the Pinyari a few miles below Hyderabad. Apparently it is restricted to this zone ; we were unable to find it in Miani Forest at Hyderabad, or in a wooded area south of Jamraohead, but Eates recorded it at Mirpur Sakro, Mirpur Khas, and as far north as Sakrand (nearNawabshah).

[**Mirafra javanica** Horsfield. Singing Bush Lark

Sind is included in the range of this lark in Ripley, but Ticehurst recorded only one bird, near Karachi, and we have no knowledge of it.]

Mirafra erythroptera Blyth. Redwinged Bush Lark

This is probably not uncommon in areas of desert scrub, although we have few records only, from near Tando Bago in the south-east, west of Hyderabad, and near Karachi.

Eremopterix grisea (Scopoli). Ashycrowned Finch-Lark

Eremopterix nigriceps (Gould). Blackcrowned Finch-Lark

These finch-larks are common, especially the Ashycrowned, which likes both desert scrub and dry cultivation, and little flocks of 4 or 5 are seen commonly along dusty field roads and near villages. The Blackcrowned is less common, and is perhaps confined to desert areas.

Ammomanes deserti (Lichtenstein). Desert Finch-Lark

Restricted to jebels. It was found to be quite common at Kot Diji and Roberts states that it is a common resident in the lower parts of the Khirtar Range.

[**Ammomanes phoenicurus** (Franklin). Rufoustailed Finch-Lark

We have no knowledge of this bird in Sind.]

Alaemon alaudipes (Desfontaines). Hoopoe-Lark

Very locally distributed, we saw this bird only in the Pat Desert (along the Jacobabad-Sibi Road), south of Sehwan, and in the margins of the cultivated areas south of Badin and Jati. In these desert plains (the Pat Desert is almost totally devoid of vegetation), they are not uncommon, and ones or twos can be seen every half-mile or so.

Calandrella cinerea (Gmelin). Short-toed Lark

A common winter visitor, in parties or quite large flocks, mostly to areas of desert scrub.

Calandrella raytal (Blyth). Sand Lark

Quite common along the Indus, and occasionally around the bare margins of pools. Roberts found it common in the sand dunes near Karachi.

[**Melanocorypha bimaculata** (Ménétries). Eastern Calandra Lark

We have no knowledge of this lark, but earlier records suggest that it may be a not uncommon winter visitor to Upper Sind and the Thar Desert.]

Galerida cristata (Linnaeus). Crested Lark

Very common, both as a resident and as a winter visitor, in most lowland habitats.

Alauda sp. Skylarks

The status of the skylarks in Sind is not very clear. *A. gulgula* appears to be a rather local resident, in the more fertile districts and in clearings in the riverain forests.

Riparia sp. Sand Martins

The two species of Sand Martin were not always readily separated, but the Plain Sand Martin (*R. paludicola*) is a very common resident, while the Collared form (*R. riparia*) is probably only a winter visitor. Ticehurst stated that the Collared Sand Martin leaves in March, but we saw large flocks of apparently this species along telegraph wires in Upper Sind in mid-April in both 1964 and 1965, and in the reeds of Jamraohead on May 11.

Hirundo obsoleta (Cabanis). Pale Crag Martin

Probably resident in the foothills of the Khirtar Range, seen at heights from about 500 feet upwards.

Hirundo rustica Linnaeus. Swallow

In general, a very common visitor and perhaps also passage migrant, but its movements seem to be very irregular, and not as well defined as Ticehurst suggests. They were common in the Hyderabad-Badin area on June 22, 1963, and again throughout August. In 1964, in the Sukkur area, they were rather scarce in the winter and spring, and although odd birds were seen through the summer, they were not common again until September.

In 1965, about 100 birds had arrived along the bund at Kalri Lake by June 27, and by July 25 they were widely distributed in the Hyderabad area. There were perhaps a thousand on the Kalri bund on August 1. (However, Ticehurst states that they do not reach Lower Sind until September or even October).

Hirundo smithii Leach. Wiretailed Swallow

Common along canals, favouring the arches of canal bridges for its nests. In Upper Sind, it is a summer visitor only, arriving at the end of February or in March. Odd birds may be seen as early as February 2. In Lower Sind, a certain proportion are resident.

Lanius excubitor Linnaeus. Grey Shrike

Resident and locally common, in dry cultivated or marginal areas and desert scrub.

Lanius vittatus Valenciennes. Baybacked Shrike

Resident; commoner than the previous species, preferring more fertile or wooded areas.

Lanius collurio Linnaeus. Redbacked Shrike

A fairly common winter visitor from mid-September to early March, to a variety of habitats from desert scrub to gardens. They were appa-

rently the *phoenicuroides* and *isabellinus* forms and we did not identify *L. c. collurio*.

Lanius schach Linnaeus. Rufousbacked Shrike

Resident and common, in the same habitat as the Baybacked but also extending to drier areas of scrubland.

Oriolus oriolus (Linnaeus). Golden Oriole

Two single males, seen along tree-lined canals in the Eastern Nara area, on August 20 and 26, 1963, are our only records, and it is presumably a scarce passage migrant only.

Dicrurus adsimilis (Bechstein). Black Drongo

A common and widespread resident, breeding in June. Sometimes quite large feeding concentrations are found, for example near livestock, a fire, or over dried-out reed beds.

[**Sturnus pagodarum** (Gmelin). Blackheaded Myna

Ticehurst saw this myna around Karachi, but we never found it in Sind.]

Sturnus roseus (Linnaeus). Rosy Pastor

A very abundant passage migrant, but few stay the winter ; and then only in Lower Sind (probably more in Karachi than in Hyderabad). The northward passage begins in late-February or early-March in the Hyderabad area, lasting until mid-or late-April. In Sukkur in 1964, the spring passage lasted from April 5 to May 4. We were astonished to find that the return passage was already in full swing by June 24, reaching enormous numbers in July (probably millions in the riverain forests just north of Sukkur), fading off at the end of July but with a subsidiary peak in the second week of August. They seemed to advance southwards in steps or overlapping waves, (the immatures following a little later) reaching Lower Sind some time in August. A few stragglers remain at Sukkur until about October, and all the winter in the Hyderabad area.

Sturnus vulgaris Linnaeus. Starling

A fairly common winter visitor and perhaps, in Upper Sind, passage migrant (for a slight influx was noted in early February 1964 around Sukkur), arriving late and leaving rather early. The smaller Sind race, *S. v. minor*, is, however, resident, and can be seen fairly commonly through the summer in flooded tamarix scrub etc. around jheels or in the riverain forests ; as Ticehurst says, they may, however, be rather local.

Acridotheres tristis (Linnaeus). Common Myna

Abundant and resident.

Acridotheres ginginianus (Latham). Bank Myna

A common resident, but rather local (especially in the breeding season in March and April), favouring the riverain tracts and more lush grazing land. In late summer, they were roosting in large numbers with the Rosy Pastors.

Dendrocitta vagabunda (Latham). Indian Tree Pie

Common throughout the well-wooded tracts.

Corvus splendens Vieillot. House Crow

Ubiquitous.

Corvus corax Linnaeus. Raven

A fairly common winter visitor in parts of Upper Sind, leaving about mid-March. Prior to this date, flocks of 100 or so were seen along the edge of the Pat Desert near Jhatpat. Occasionally they can be seen in summer, for example at Kot Diji, where they may be breeding in the jebel. Two were seen at a Sukkur rubbish tip on April 4. We never saw any in Lower Sind.

Tephrodornis pondicerianus (Gmelin). Common Wood Shrike

Resident and quite common in well-timbered areas, but rather easily overlooked.

[**Pericrocotus ethologus** Bangs & Phillips. Longtailed Minivet

A female minivet, probably of this species, was seen in Miani Forest at Hyderabad in February, but the record was not confirmed. It is probably an uncommon winter visitor. The Rosy Minivet (*P. roseus*) has been recorded by Ticehurst at Karachi.]

Pericrocotus cinnamomeus (Linnaeus). Small Minivet

Fairly common resident in riverain forests and well-timbered areas, and even in more desert areas where hollows hold clumps of acacia trees.

[**Pericrocotus erythropygius** (Jerdon). Whitebellied Minivet

Sind is included in the range of this minivet, but it must be very local, or only a straggler, and we have no knowledge of it.]

Pycnonotus leucogenys (Gray). Whitecheeked Bulbul

An abundant resident, found anywhere from waterlogged thickets to bare desert scrub in the hills.

Pycnonotus cafer (Linnaeus). Redvented Bulbul

This bulbul is resident in the East Nara Canal area, at Karachi (probably from escapes), and at Multan in the Punjab. However, its range

in Sind may be diminishing, for it was a common resident in the rest house garden at Sindri in the last century, and Eates (personal communication) found it to be quite common at Mirpur Khas, Samaro, Digri and Umarkot in 1936. We travelled widely in this area, but found it only at Naukot, adjacent to the Thar Desert, where it was not uncommon. We were surprised to find a pair in a small orchard and garden at Sukkur in May 1964, which remained for the rest of the year, but just possibly these were escaped birds.

Chrysomma sinensis (Gmelin). Yelloweyed Babbler

Fairly common locally, in damp thickets, canal-side vegetation etc.; recorded from the Sukkur area, Kandiaro, Hyderabad, Sujawal, Samaro, and Jhudo.

[**Chrysomma altirostre** Jerdon. Jerdon's Babbler

We spent much time in dense grass jungle between Sukkur and Shikarpur, the type locality of *C. a. scindicum*, but were unable to locate it. In 1930, Eates (personal communication) found a nest with two eggs by the Eastern Nara near Sukkur, and later saw birds near the type locality.]

Turdoides caudatus (Dumont). Common Babbler

An abundant bird in cultivation, thickets, and even desert scrub, in the plains and the jebels. Rare or absent in forests and swamps.

Turdoides earlei (Blyth). Striated Babbler

Replaces the previous species in swampy ground, where it is very common.

[**Turdoides malcolmi** (Sykes). Large Grey Babbler

Ticehurst was doubtful of the validity of some previous records of this bird from Sehwan, although strangely one record is quoted by Ripley.]

Turdoides striatus (Dumont). Jungle Babbler

Common resident; its favourite habitat is the riverain forests, but it occurs in any well-timbered country, generally avoiding scrub.

Muscicapa striata (Pallas). Spotted Flycatcher

Apparently an uncommon autumn passage migrant. One seen at Dabeji spring (east of Karachi) on October 10, and another in Miani Forest near Hyderabad on November 6.

Muscicapa parva Bechstein. Redbreasted Flycatcher

According to Ticehurst, this is more of a passage migrant, especially

in spring, than a winter visitor, the spring passage lasting from late-March to mid-April. The majority of our records are from rest house gardens, within the period February 6 to April 17, and few such gardens of any size are without them in this period ; but they were also found in the riverain forests and other wooded areas. At Usta Mohammed rest house, near Jacobabad, they were decidedly common at the end of March, and apparently already paired-off. We have only few autumn records.

Rhipidura aureola Lesson. Whitebrowed Fantail Flycatcher

Fairly common in damp, vegetated places all over Sind, occurring also in the riverain forests, tree-lined canals, gardens etc. In Ripley's SYNOPSIS Sind is not included in the range of any species of *Rhipidura*.

[**Terpsiphone paradisi** (Linnaeus). Paradise Flycatcher

Apparently a rare winter visitor to Sind, but we never saw it.]

Cettia cetti (Marmora). Cetti's Warbler

Found to be not uncommon in the winter of 1963-64, in reed beds or grass and tamarix jungle by water, at Jati, and Habibkot near Sukkur, from mid-December to February.

Lusciniola melanopogon (Temminck). Moustached Sedge Warbler

A commoner winter visitor than the Cetti's, seen at the same places and dates, and in similar habitat. Also seen in 1965 (last date, April 4, near Sujawal). On March 1, 1964, they were very common in the Habibkot reed beds, and surprisingly in full song.

Cisticola juncidis (Rafinesque). Streaked Fantail Warbler

Quite a common resident, but perhaps rather local ; in cereal crops, long grass around jheels and grass meadow in the riverain area. According to Ticehurst it is less common in Upper Sind, but we found it quite common in cereal crops bordering the Pat Desert near Jacobabad.

Prinia buchanani Blyth. Rufousfronted Longtail Warbler

Quite common in desert scrub in S.W. Sind, in small groups ; we have no records from elsewhere in Sind, although it may occur in grassland areas in the plains.

Prinia gracilis (Lichtenstein). Streaked Longtail Warbler

Prinia subflava (Gmelin). Plain Longtail Warbler

Both these birds are common, more especially the latter. *P. gracilis* occurs in scrubland, often near water, while *P. subflava* is more usually found in fertile cultivated areas

Prinia flaviventris (Delessert). Yellowbellied Longtail Warbler

This delightful little warbler was first recognized in the reed beds and rushes of the Nara system above Sanghar. Since then, it was found throughout Sind, almost wherever there is suitable habitat, from Jati in the south, Kalri and Manchar lakes in the west, and Sukkur in the north. Once known, the cheerful ' tweedle-li-li ' song is unmistakable, and indicates the presence of the bird, which is otherwise often rather secretive and easy to miss. The reed beds at Habibkot were literally ringing with this song everywhere. It also occurs in long grass jungle beside jheels or canals. It can sometimes be seen singing conspicuously from the top of a reed, the ' tweedle-li-li ' note interspersed with a strong body jerk accompanied by the snapping noise that is reputed to come from the bill. There are two or three variants of the song, the usual one being a shrill, plaintive ' swee-swee-swee '.

This is the one species that would appear to have increased greatly, since Ticehurst considered it to be a very local bird, and not found everywhere where conditions were suitable.

[**Prinia criniger** Hodgson. Brown Longtail Hill Warbler

Not seen by ourselves, but it is presumably resident in the Khirtar Hills, where Roberts has seen it in January.]

Prinia burnesii (Blyth). Longtailed Grass Warbler

A fairly common bird in dense grass-tamarix jungle or other thickets in damp places. The usual call is a wheezy ' feez ', and it has a quiet nasal rattle when alarmed. When really alarmed, it has a very rapidly repeated ' chit ' or ' szik '. The song is a clear, sweet, liquid warble, of about 4 seconds, faintly reminiscent of the Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*).

Orthotomus sutorius (Pennant). Tailor Bird

Fairly common, in gardens or well-wooded areas, but also, surprisingly, in euphorbia scrub in the desert of S.W. Sind.

[**Locustella naevia** (Boddaert). Grasshopper Warbler

We have no records of this bird, which Ticehurst saw only twice in Sind.]

Acrocephalus stentoreus (Hemprich & Ehrenberg). Indian Great Reed Warbler

A fairly common winter visitor, and partial resident, especially in *phragmites* reeds. On passage, they may turn up in unlikely places ; for example on April 8, nearly a dozen were present in shrubs and a lone acacia tree in a small irrigated farm on the edge of the Pat Desert.

Acrocephalus dumetorum Blyth. Blyth's Reed Warbler

A passage migrant, fairly common in spring (early April to mid-May), but probably rare in autumn. They may halt awhile on spring passage, (one was present in a Sukkur garden from April 27 to May 14) and weak song can be heard then.

Acrocephalus agricola (Jerdon). Paddyfield Warbler

A winter visitor to margins of jheels etc., recorded in February and early March near Sukkur.

Hippolais caligata (Lichtenstein). Booted Warbler

Status uncertain, but it was not uncommon throughout the summer in riverain areas of tamarix scrub below Sukkur barrage, and is presumably resident.

Sylvia hortensis (Gmelin). Orphean Warbler

Two definite records only, in mid-March and mid-October.

Sylvia sp. Whitethroats

Without either a field-guide or specimens, the various species of whitethroat are difficult to separate in the field. *S. curruca* is abundant, visiting the more timbered areas of Sind from late-September to late-April. They sometimes arrive in quite a rush : in 1964, the first was seen in Hyderabad on September 24, but by 27 there was scarcely a bush or tree without a Lesser Whitethroat. *S. nana* was identified in the more desert regions, but records of *S. minula* and *S. althaea* were not confirmed.

Phylloscopus sp. Leaf Warblers

Leaf warblers are abundant in winter, but like *Sylvia* are also very difficult to separate in the field. The Chiffchaff (*P. collybita*) is the commonest form, and has a weak, hesitant song not unlike the European bird in its summer quarters, but involving three notes instead of two. *P. neglectus* and *P. nitidus* are the only other species recorded by Ticehurst, who comments on the absence of records in Sind of either *P. griseolus* or *P. inornatus*.

Erythropygia galactotes (Temminck). Rufous Chat

According to Ticehurst, this is an autumn passage migrant only. We did not find it until 1965, when some half-a-dozen were seen singly in scrub and dry fallow land in the desert west of Hyderabad on August 8. We were unable to visit this area again, but one turned up in a garden at Hyderabad on September 25 and 26. All these records are outside Ticehurst's extreme dates of September 3 and 24.

Erithacus svecicus (Linnaeus). Bluethroat

A passage migrant and winter visitor from late-October to late-March (perhaps early-April) to damp localities, usually seen on the ground or in low vegetation around marshes, irrigated fields etc. Weak song has been heard in late-November and in February. Males in spring in breeding plumage have all been of the red-spotted form.

[**Copsychus saularis** (Linnaeus). Magpie-Robin

This bird apparently does not yet extend into Sind, although it may well do so as a result of agricultural development. Roberts has recorded it at Bahawalnagar in Bahawalpur Division.]

Phœnicurus ochruros (S. G. Gmelin). Black Redstart

A common winter visitor from October to March (extreme dates, September 25 and March 27), from riverain forests to desert scrub. It is the commonest of the migrant chats in the better-wooded areas.

[**Saxicola macrorhyncha** (Stoliczka). Stoliczka's Bush Chat

A pair of chats believed to be of this species was seen on February 28 in the Pat Desert, but the male was not closely observed. The site was an abandoned field, with dense dry ground vegetation, in a desert area.]

Saxicola torquata (Linnaeus). Stone Chat

A winter visitor in very small numbers to damp, marginal areas of cultivation from October to February ; few records from Lower Sind. Some records may refer to the next form.

Saxicola leucura (Blyth). Whitetailed Stone Chat

One male identified in dried-up reed beds and grass-tamarix jungle at Habibkot on June 26 is our only definite record of this resident chat.

Saxicola caprata (Linnaeus). Pied Bush Chat

A common resident, widely distributed in scrub jungle and especially in damp, non-saline areas. It is less common in the most densely cultivated areas. The short song was likened to ' we are tea for two ' (highest note on ' tea '). A nest in a hole in a grassy bank was found on May 26, and immatures are seen mostly in June.

Oenanthe isabellina (Temminck). Isabelline Wheatear

A rather uncommon winter visitor. Our records are all from desert scrub in Lower Sind (mostly in the Dabeji area, east of Karachi, from mid-September to November).

Oenanthe xanthoprymna (Hemprich & Ehrenberg). Redtailed Wheatear

A winter visitor to rocky areas (or embankments etc., in the desert portions of the plains) ; extreme dates, October 4 and February 8 (none were seen at Ranikot in the Lakki Hills on February 14).

Oenanthe deserti (Temminck). Desert Wheatear

A common winter visitor to semi-desert areas or adjacent cultivation (and according to Roberts to coastal dunes near Karachi) from October to March. Stragglers were seen on September 12 near Tatta and April 11 in the Pat Desert.

Oenanthe picata (Blyth). Pied Chat

A very common winter visitor to cultivation, desert scrub, villages etc. Males greatly predominate over females. It arrives early (August 1 is our earliest date), and during August and September the song is heard commonly, as the birds adopt their winter territories. Most have left by early March. We have no records of the 'Whitecapped' and 'Strickland's' forms in Sind.

[**Oenanthe monacha** (Temminck). Hooded Chat

Oenanthe alboniger (Hume). Hume's Chat

We have no records of either of these chats, both inhabitants of the Khirtar Hills.]

Saxicoloides fulicata (Linnaeus). Indian Robin

A common resident. Ticehurst found it a bird of thin desert-scrub, and was surprised to find it in damp grass-scrub areas. We found it very common in the cultivated plains, often near habitation, but always in dry sites.

Monticola saxatilis (Linnaeus). Rock Thrush

A female or immature male was obtained in euphorbia scrub at Dabeji, near Karachi, on October 6, 1963.

[**Monticola solitarius** (Linnaeus). Blue Rock Thrush

We have no records of this winter visitor to the higher hill ranges.]

[**Turdus ruficollis** Pallas. Redthroated Thrush

The blackthroated form is perhaps common in some winters only. Roberts has recorded it at Kandhkot in February, but we never found it.]

Parus major Linnaeus. Grey Tit

The Grey Tit has not previously been recorded from Sind, but on March 27 and 28, 1964, a single bird was seen by D.A.H. at Usta

Mohammed, near Jacobabad. The location is in fact just outside the boundary of the former Sind province, but the habitat is more typical of the fertile Sind plains, and quite unlike the adjacent bare desert of Baluchistan. The bird was frequenting tall, canal-side shisham trees adjacent to the well-timbered garden of Usta Mohammed Inspection Bungalow. These trees would be the first that a bird would encounter after straggling down from the Baluchistan mountains across the barren Pat Desert, in the cold winter of that year. It was closely observed for a period of half-an-hour on the first day. Sub-species could not be established from a sight record, but Ziarat, the type-locality of *P.m ziaratensis*, is only 130 miles distant.

Remiz pendulinus (Linnaeus). Penduline Tit

Two Penduline Tits were seen by D.A.H. on February 15, 1963, feeding in reeds and rushes beside the Mithrao Canal near Sindri, some 50 miles north-east of Hyderabad. This species has only previously been recorded in Sind near Sukkur in February 1904, and this new record constitutes the most southerly record in Sind, if not in the sub-continent. According to Roberts, it is a not uncommon winter visitor to shisham forests near Khanewal, in Lower Punjab, where we ourselves saw it in 1965.

Some discrepancies in the head plumage compared with the European form were puzzling in 1963. In the latter form, the black stripe extending from the bill through the cheek terminates at the ear coverts, whereas in the Sind form the stripes meet at the rear of the crown, behind which there is a white or pale grey bar across the nape. However, a specimen obtained at Khanewal in 1965 confirmed that the head plumage differs from that of the European form.

Anthus sp. Pipits

The pipits were rather overlooked. The Tawny Pipit (*A. campestris*) is a common winter visitor to fallow and barren land, and open fields away from trees, and the Water Pipit (*A. spinoletta*) to wet ground. The resident Paddyfields Pipit (*A. novaeseelandiae*) is quite common in the non-saline grasslands of the riverain areas and around jheels ; a nest with 3 eggs was found in a forest clearing at Sukkur on May 25.

Motacilla flava Linnaeus. Yellow Wagtail

Winter visitor, and abundant passage migrant (earliest date, August 14). *M. f. beema* and *M. f. melanogrisea* appear to be the races involved. The latest date is April 17, apart from one *melanogrisea* seen at Habibkot, near Sukkur, on June 26.

Motacilla citreola Pallas. Yellowheaded Wagtail

Perhaps commoner than *M. flava*, but with similar status, although a

greater number of this species over-winter. Extreme dates are September 5 and May 9.

Motacilla alba Linnaeus. White Wagtail

A very common winter visitor, and perhaps passage migrant, from September to April (earliest date, August 24). The main arrival is in late-September and early-October.

[**Motacilla maderaspatensis** Gmelin. Large Pied Wagtail

This wagtail was once considered to be a resident in the East Nara District, but neither Ticehurst nor we have seen it in Sind, although it is common in the Lower Punjab.]

Nectarinia asiatica (Latham). Purple Sunbird

A common resident in the south, and summer visitor in Upper Sind arriving about early March. At Hyderabad, numbers are only slightly decreased in winter. Habitat ranges from gardens and cultivation to desert scrub. The red and yellow pectoral tufts, clearly visible in birds of the Lower Punjab, are extremely difficult to see in Sind birds.

[**Zosterops palpebrosa** (Temminck). White-eye

It is strange that the White-eye, which is common in the Lower Punjab, is not found in Sind except in rare colonies in the mangrove swamps at Karachi, where Ticehurst saw them only after prolonged searches. We ourselves did not see them.]

Passer domesticus (Linnaeus). House Sparrow

Abundant, near all human habitations. In late winter, dense roosting flocks of many thousands, in reed beds and grass scrub in Upper Sind, perform high speed aerial evolutions before retiring.

[**Passer hispaniolensis** (Temminck). Spanish Sparrow

This sparrow is said to winter in Upper Sind in small numbers, but we never identified it at the sparrow roosts.]

Passer pyrrhonotus Blyth. Sind Jungle Sparrow

Not uncommon in the riverain forests and tamarix jungle around jheels, co-existing with *P. domesticus* where human habitations lie in such localities. A female was seen at the nest at the end of February at Muradani (south of Tatta), and nestlings were seen near Sukkur in early-July.

Petronia xanthocollis (Burton). Yellowthroated Sparrow

A fairly common but rather locally distributed bird, common in the riverain forests and similar sites, but ranging also to trees in desert areas.

It was the commonest 'sparrow' at Jamraohead in May. It is resident in the South, but is said to be a summer visitor only in Upper and Central Sind, breeding in April and May.

Ploceus philippinus (Linnaeus). Baya

Probably less common than the next species, but widely distributed in the cultivated areas, colonies often nesting in acacia trees in quite open cultivated land.

[**Ploceus benghalensis** (Linnaeus). Blackthroated Weaver Bird

There are early records of this bird in Sind, but neither Ticehurst nor we have seen it, and Eates (personal communication) saw it only once, near Badin in 1922.]

Ploceus manyar (Horsfield). Streaked Weaver Bird

Very common in the cultivated areas, especially along canals, favouring canal-side patches of reeds and rushes. Locally it is abundant; there were colonies every 50 yards or so along the reedy margins of the Mithrao Canal. The males, in breeding plumage and song, first become conspicuous at the end of March or early April; nest-building commences in May.

Estrilda amandava (Linnaeus). Red Munia

Generally distributed in small parties over the cultivated areas, especially long grass and rushes in damp sites.

Lonchura malabarica (Linnaeus). Whitethroated Munia

Generally distributed in small parties over the cultivated areas, extending into desert scrub and the foothills.

[**Serinus pusillus** (Pallas). Goldfronted Finch

Recorded at Sukkur (Cole 1931) as a winter vagrant, but no subsequent records.]

[**Rhodopechys githaginea** (Lichtenstein). Trumpeter Bullfinch

This bird descends to the rocky foothills in winter, and Roberts has seen it near Karachi in April, through to May.]

[**Carpodacus erythrinus** (Pallas). Common Rosefinch

Roberts has seen this wintering in thorn scrub ravines in the Khirtar Range.]

Emberiza melanocephala Scopoli. Blackheaded Bunting

An abundant passage migrant through the cereal crops of Lower and Central Sind from mid-March to mid-April. Return passage commences

in the second half of August (earliest, August 14, Sehwan). It apparently does not pass through Upper Sind. Males predominate.

[**Emberiza bruniceps** Brandt. Redheaded Bunting

This bunting was not included in Ticehurst's list. We did not find any among the spring flocks of the Blackheaded, but had unconfirmed records from Sehwan in August.]

[**Emberiza stewarti** (Blyth). Whitecapped Bunting

This bird evidently straggles into Sind only rarely, but neither Ticehurst, Roberts nor ourselves have met with it.]

Emberiza buchanani Blyth. Greynecked Bunting

We have only two records of this passage migrant, both in the spring of 1965. On April 9, a small party, composed mostly of males, was seen in euphorbia scrub on a rocky spur overlooking the Indus near Tatta, and on April 15 a male was seen in a housing compound at Sukkur.

[**Emberiza cia** Linnaeus. Rock Bunting

A winter visitor to the mountain ranges west of Sind, which Roberts has seen in the southern-most hills north of Karachi.]

Emberiza striolata (Lichtenstein). Striped Bunting

A winter visitor to rocky desert, recorded commonly around Karachi and Kot Diji. In mid-February, it was the commonest bird at Ranikot in the Lakki Hills, and in full song (likewise in the lower reaches of the Bolan Pass in mid-April), and it may breed in the Khirtar, even in the foothills.

[**Emberiza schoeniclus** (Linnaeus). Reed Bunting

Single birds recorded on three occasions by Ticehurst seem to be the only records of this bird in Sind.]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We should like to record our thanks to the Pakistan Zoological Survey Department for the use of their facilities, to K. R. Eates for so generously permitting the free use of his field-notes, and to C. D. W. Savage, Honorary Organiser of the Wildfowl Survey of South-west Asia. We are especially grateful to T. J. Roberts of Khanewal, who supplied many records, and without whose constant encouragement this paper might never have been written.

References

Ali, Sálim (1928): A Sind Lake. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **32** (3): 460-471, 3 figs., 6 pls.

Cole, F. H. (1931): The Occurrence of the Gold-Fronted Finch (*Metaponia pusilla*) at Sukkur, Sind. op. cit., **35** (1): 207.

Eates, K. R. (1937): The Distribution and Nidification of the Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga* Pallas) in Sind. op. cit. **39** (2): 403-405.

——— (1937): The Distribution and Nidification of the Large Indian Paroquet (*Psittacula eupatria nipalensis* Hodgs.) in Sind. ibid. **39** (2): 414-418.

——— (1937): The Status of the Koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus* L.) in Sind. ibid. **39** (2).: 406-414.

——— (1937): A Note on the Distribution and Nidification of the Northern Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker [*Leiopicus mahrattensis blanfordi* (Blyth)] in Sind. op. cit. **39** (3): 628-631.

——— (1937): The Distribution and Nidification of the Rock Horned Owl [*Bubo bubo bengalensis* (Frankl.)] in Sind. ibid. **39** (3): 631-633.

——— (1938): The Status of the Koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus* L.) in Sind. op. cit. **40** (2): 328.

——— (1938): Occurrence of the Lesser Orange-breasted Green Pigeon (*Dendrophasa bicincta bicincta*) at Keamari, Sind. ibid. **40** (2): 330-331.

——— (1939): The Distribution and Nidification of the Indian (Punjab) Raven (*Corvus corax laurencei* Hume) in Sind. op. cit. **40** (4): 747-750.

——— (1939): A Note on the Resident Owls of Sind. ibid. **40** (4): 750-755.

——— (1939): The Status and Nidification of the Persian Bee-eater (*Merops persicus persicus* Pall.) in Sind. ibid. **40** (4): 756-759.

——— (1943): The Arabian Large-crested Sea Tern (*Sterna bergii velox*) breeding off the Sind coast. op. cit. **44** (2): 302-303.

Menesse, N. H. (1939): The Punjab Sirkeer Cuckoo [*Taccocua leschenaultii sirkee* (Gray)] in Sind. op. cit. **41** (1): 172-173.

Ripley, S. D. (1961): A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay.

Roberts, T. J. (1967): Personal Communication.

Savage, C. D. W. (1965): Wildfowl Survey in South-west Asia; a progress report. *Wildfowl Trust. Sixteenth Annual Report*. 1963-1964.

——— (1966): Wildfowl Survey in South-west Asia; progress in 1965. op. cit. *Seventeenth Annual Report*. 1964-'65.

Ticehurst, C. B. (1922-24): The Birds of Sind. (in eight parts). *Ibis* **4** (3)-**6** (3).

Waite, H. W. (1962): Notes on the Range of certain birds as given in S. D. Ripley II. (1961): A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **59** (3): 958-963.

(Concluded)